

WOMEN: Blue-Collar Jobs Are

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Standing outside all day no matter what the weather while directing traffic can become tedious, but Mrs. Wilkes says she enjoys being out of the office-type atmosphere.

"I was thinking about all those glamour type jobs at little dress

shops and business offices, and I much prefer this. The pay is great and my hours are much better."

Mrs. Wilkes, who is a mother as well as a Theater Arts major at Brigham Young University, said she leaves for work by 7 a.m. and gets off around 3:30 p.m., in time to "be home when my kids get there."

At first she was apprehensive about accepting the flagger job.

"My husband and I wanted to buy a house, and although he makes a good salary, we thought my working would put us in sooner. Most of the jobs in this town pay barely minimum wage, but with this one, I'm making substantially more."

"I wasn't sure what to expect,

but it turned out to be a simpler job than I thought. I do come home completely covered with dust, though, and my husband just laughs. No one ever thought I was the type for this."

Passing motorists keep up a steady stream of catcalls and whistles, but Mrs. Wilkes said she usually just ignores them.

"The funny thing is, I don't know if they're whistling because they think I look okay or because they're smart alecks!"

Women truck drivers working in the canyon area also mention the high-scale pay as an attractive job benefit. They say job satisfaction is high, although the work can be strenuous.

"Women have become very accepted in this business," said Becky Antonio, 22, of Springville. Mrs. Antonio has worked as a flagger for nearly a month.

"All of the flaggers working on this job are women except for one. We also have some female truck drivers, carpenters and laborers. They do a great job."

Nationally, women working in blue collar jobs enjoy a more equal pay scale with male workers. Other jobs do not rate so well.

Although there has been a 95% increase in the number of working women in the United States over the last two decades, the salary gap between the sexes has actually widened.

The difference in salaries between men and women is double what it was only a decade ago, according to the U.S. Department



Mark Schneller Photo

Sandra Wilkes, flagger, helps slow down traffic in Provo Canyon.

Survey Reveals Women's Job Concerns